

Palm Harbor, FL (July 6, 2011) – Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-09) has presented Frank Chicollo with the Civilian Marksmanship Program's (CMP) Patriot Award to recognize his dedication and continuous service to the United States and the Tampa Bay area.

"Frank has always been more than willing to lend a helping hand to his community and to his fellow veterans," Bilirakis said. "He has been a true hero for me as I have made it a priority to ensure our veterans receive the benefits they deserve. His devotion to these men and women and his years of ongoing service to both them and to their families makes him an ideal candidate to receive the Patriot Award."



Born in Brooklyn, NY, Chicollo served as an infantryman and Ranger from 1966 to 1970. After completing his training, Chicollo was deployed to Vietnam as part of the 10,000-troop buildup for the Tet Offensive. During his service in Vietnam, Chicollo received three Purple Hearts. He was honorably separated from the Army as an E-4 in 1970 and a few years later, in 1974, decided to make Florida his home.

Chicollo went on to put in 27 years with the U.S. Postal Service and remains a proud member of several veteran service organizations. He currently is State Area Committeeman of the Disabled American Veterans organization. He was past commander and VSO of Military Order of the Purple Heart; Senior Vice Commander, Legislative Director, Membership Director and VSO for the Disabled American Veterans Chapter #4; Member of the American Legion Post #5; and Member of the VFW Post 10167, Holiday.

The CMP is a national organization dedicated to training and educating U. S. citizens in responsible uses of firearms and air guns through gun safety training, marksmanship training and competitions. The CMP actively assists the mission of our armed services. As such, the organization created the Patriots Program, where outstanding citizens are recognized for their contributions to our country.

The Patriot Award is represented by the presentation of an actual M1 Garand, the rifle that, along with the G.I. and Rosie the Riveter, won WWII. Charlie Maddox, CEO of the CMP and Korean War veteran, presented the rifle to Chicollo in late April.